

§ 1209.3

in § 1209.4(a) of this part that are allegedly threatened, proposed, taken, or not taken because of the appellant's whistleblowing activities. If the action is not otherwise directly appealable to the Board, the appellant must seek corrective action from the Special Counsel before appealing to the Board.

Example: Agency A gives Mr. X a performance evaluation under 5 U.S.C. chapter 43 that rates him as "minimally satisfactory." Mr. X believes that the agency has rated him "minimally satisfactory" because of his whistleblowing activities. Because a performance evaluation is not an otherwise appealable action, Mr. X must seek corrective action from the Special Counsel before appealing to the Board or before seeking a stay of the evaluation. If Mr. X appeals the evaluation to the Board after the Special Counsel proceeding is terminated or exhausted, his appeal is an individual right of action appeal.

(2) *Otherwise appealable action appeals.* These are appeals to the Board under laws, rules, or regulations other than 5 U.S.C. 1221(a) that include an allegation that the action was based on the appellant's whistleblowing activities. The appellant may choose either to seek corrective action from the Special Counsel before appealing to the Board or to appeal directly to the Board. (Examples of such otherwise appealable actions are listed in 5 CFR 1201.3 (a)(1) through (a)(19).)

Example: Agency B removes Ms. Y for alleged misconduct under 5 U.S.C. 7513. Ms. Y believes that the agency removed her because of her whistleblowing activities. Because the removal action is appealable to the Board under some law, rule or regulation other than 5 U.S.C. 1221(a), Ms. Y may choose to file an appeal with the Board without first seeking corrective action from the Special Counsel or to seek corrective action from the Special Counsel and then appeal to the Board.

(3) *Stays.* Where the appellant alleges that a personnel action was or will be based on whistleblowing, the Board may, upon the appellant's request, order an agency to suspend that action.

§ 1209.3 Application of 5 CFR part 1201.

Except as expressly provided in this part, the Board will apply subparts A, B, C, E, F, and G of 5 CFR part 1201 to appeals and stay requests governed by

5 CFR Ch. II (1-1-04 Edition)

this part. The Board will apply the provisions of subpart H of part 1201 regarding awards of attorney fees and consequential damages under 5 U.S.C. 1221(g) to appeals governed by this part.

[55 FR 28592, July 12, 1990, as amended at 62 FR 17048, Apr. 9, 1997]

§ 1209.4 Definitions.

(a) *Personnel action* means, as to individuals and agencies covered by 5 U.S.C. 2302:

- (1) An appointment;
- (2) A promotion;
- (3) An adverse action under chapter 75 of title 5, United States Code or other disciplinary or corrective action;
- (4) A detail, transfer, or reassignment;
- (5) A reinstatement;
- (6) A restoration;
- (7) A reemployment;
- (8) A performance evaluation under chapter 43 of title 5, United States Code;
- (9) A decision concerning pay, benefits, or awards, or concerning education or training if the education or training may reasonably be expected to lead to an appointment, promotion, performance evaluation, or other personnel action;
- (10) A decision to order psychiatric testing or examination; or
- (11) Any other significant change in duties, responsibilities, or working conditions.

(b) *Whistleblowing* is the disclosure of information by an employee, former employee, or applicant that the individual reasonably believes evidences a violation of law, rule, or regulation, gross mismanagement, gross waste of funds, abuse of authority, or substantial and specific danger to public health or safety. It does not include a disclosure that is specifically prohibited by law or required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign affairs, unless such information is disclosed to the Special Counsel, the Inspector General of an agency, or an employee designated by the head of the agency to receive it.

(c) *Contributing factor* means any disclosure that affects an agency's decision to threaten, propose, take, or not